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APPROVED BY AF - EWMULCAHY

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EXDIS TOSEC 445

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.) PFOR, MASS, PINS, ET,US

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM - PRESS GUIDANCE ON U.S.
RESPONSE TO ETHIOPIAN RESUPPLY REQUEST (S/S 7505115)

FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS
FROM MULCAHY

THE PROBLEM: GUIDANCE IS NEEDED FOR REPLYING TO PRESS
AND OTHER QUERIES REGARDING THE U.S. RESPONSE TO THE
ETHIOPIAN EMERGENCY RESUPPLY REQUEST.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS HAVE BEEN RECEIVING INQUIRIES CON-
CERNING OUR DECISION ON THE ETHIOPIAN
RESUPPLY REQUEST. IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT THE
QUESTION WILL ARISE SOON AT A DEPARTMENT PRESS

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BRIEFING. THE GUIDANCE SET FORTH BELOW IS THEREFORE

SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL, TO BE USED BY THE DEPARTMENT
SPOKESMAN OR OFFICERS WHO ARE QUESTION D.

QUOTE:

QUESTION: HAS A DECISION BEEN MADE ON THE ETHIOPIAN
EMERGENCY RESUPPLY REQUEST?

ANSWER: YES. WE HAVE INFORMED THE ETHIOPIAN PROVISIONAL
MILITARY GOVERNMENT (PMG) THAT THE UNITED STATES IS
PREPARED TO SELL TO ETHIOPIA ON AN URGENT BASIS FOR
CASH UP TO DOLS 7 MILLION WORTH OF AMMUNITION TO
REPLENISH ETHIOPIAN INVENTORIES. WE TOOK THIS
DECISION BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY
THE SOLE SUPPLIER OF ETHIOPIA'S MILITARY NEEDS FOR
OVER 20 YEARS, AND WE DID NOT FEEL THAT WE COULD BE
UNRESPONSIVE TO THE MOST RECBNT REQUEST. AT THE SAME
TIME WE EXPRESSED TO THE EPMG OUR STRONG HOPE THAT THE
TWO SIDES IN THE ERITREAN CONFLICT WOULD SOON ENTER
INTO DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS IN ORDER TO END THE FIGHTING
IN ERITREA AND FIND AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION TO THAT
PROBLEM. IN THIS RESPECT WE ARE PLEASED TO NOTE
INDICATIONS OF THE EPMG'S READINESS TO ESTABLISH
CONTACTS WITH THE ELF/PLF, INCLUDING ITS AFFIRMATIVE
RESPONSE TO THE SUDANESE INITIATIVE FOR NEGOTIATIONS
BY AGREEING TO SEND A DELEGATION TO KHARTOUM.

QUESTION: IN LIGHT OF THE REPORTED ATROCITIES BY
ETHIOPIAN TROOPS IN ERITREA, HAS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
TAKEN ANY STAND ON THE HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF THE
PRESENT SITUATION?

ANSWER: WE ARE OF COURSE CONCERNED ABOUT ANY VIOLATIONS
OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND WE HAVE MENTIONED OUR CONCERN IN
THIS REGARD TO THE ETHIOPIANS. WE DO HAVE INFORMATION
THAT FOLLOWING THE ALLEGED EXCESSES WHICH WERE REPORTED
EARLY IN THE FIGHTING THE EPMG HAS TAKEN STEPS TO
IMPROVE THE DISCIPLINE OF ITS MILITARY FORCES AND TO
AVOID ACTIONS AGAINST THE CIVILIAN POPULATION. THE
EPMG CHARGED A NUMBER OF MILITARY PERSONNEL WITH
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COMMITTING EXCESSES AND SEVERELY PUNISHED THEM.

QUESTION: ARE THERE ANY CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WOULD
CAUSE THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO HOLD UP ON
MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA?

ANSWER: WE WOULD CERTAINLY HOPE THAT SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES
WOULD NOT ARISE IN VIEW OF OUR LONGSTANDING COOPERATIVE

RELATIONSHIP WITH ETHIOPIA AND OUR DESIRE TO HAVE THAT
RELATIONSHIP CONTINUE.

QUESTION: WOULD WE DO SO IF ETHIOPIA WERE NOT TO TAKE
ANY STEPS TOWARD NEGOTIATION?

ANSWER: THE QUESTION DOES NOT ARISE AT THIS TIME,
SINCE THE ETHIOPIANS, AS I HAVE ALREADY INDICATED,
HAVE ALREADY AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN NEGOTIATIONS.

BUREAU VIEWS:

AF BELIEVES THAT IN REPLYING TO QUESTIONS ON THIS
SUBJECT WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE OUR INTEREST IN THE
NEGOTIATING PROCESS FOR THE FAVORABLE EFFECT IT WILL
HOPEFULLY HAVE ON THE TWO PARTIES CONCERNED, IN ORDER
TO LESSEN CRITICISM OF THE RESUPPLY ACTION IN THE
UNITED STATES, AND TO MINIMIZE THE DANGER THAT THIS
RESUPPLY WILL LEAD THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT (ELF)
TO RETALIATE AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS IN ERITREA AND
ELSEWHERE IN ETHIOPIA.

RECOMMENDATION: IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE
ABOVE GUIDANCE BE APPROVED.

APPROVE: DISAPPROVE:

ALTERNATIVELY: THAT YOU PROVIDE ANY CHANGES OR DIFFERENT
GUIDANCE YOU DEEM APPROPRIATE.

APPROVE: DISAPPROVE:

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